



Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council Meets March 19

Release Date: March 5, 2012

Contact: Ashley Huibregtse, 608-224-5002

Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – The public is invited to attend the next quarterly meeting of the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council, an organization formed to bring together public and private resources to promote Wisconsin's national leadership position in organic agriculture. The Council will meet on Monday, March 19, 2012 from 9:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

The Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council is charged with advising the DATCP Secretary and other organizations and agencies on critical organic issues. The Council, formed in 2006, also supports organic production, processing and purchasing opportunities for Wisconsin farmers, processors and consumers.

At the March meeting, Council members will discuss their 2012 priorities relating to organic agriculture including the Farm Bill, genetically modified organisms and food safety laws. The guest speaker for the discussion will be Margaret Krome, the Policy Program Director at the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute and also a DATCP Board member.

The Council will also have the opportunity to meet the new Dean of the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Dr. Kathryn VandenBosch. Carla Wright will give a presentation on the new Institute for Local Organic Food Systems Education to the Council members.

The twelve Organic Advisory Council members represent organic production, processing, marketing and purchasing in Wisconsin. Each year, four seats of the Council are up for nominations. Nominations for an organic farmer, business, certifier and an 'at-large' representative are currently open and due to DATCP by the date of the meeting.

The 2008 USDA Organic Agriculture Census reports Wisconsin is home to 1,222 organic farms. This is a dramatic increase of 157-percent over five years. The growing number of organic farms keeps up with the strong demand for organic products. Wisconsin is a leader in organic dairy production and ranks sixth in the nation for organic product sales at \$132.8 million.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council or to find nominations materials, visit http://datep.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming/Advisory_Council/. For questions, contact Laura Paine, DATCP's Organic and Grazing Specialist, at 608-224-5120 or laura.paine@wi.gov. You can also connect with DATCP on Twitter at twitter.com/widatcp or Facebook at facebook.com/widatcp.

###